

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
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ARA-10 AF-10 EUR-12 SNM-05 AID-05 OMB-01 TRSE-00
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R 230742Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5428
INFO FBCONSUL HONG KONG 3019
USLO PEKING

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 RANGOON 1870

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PDIP, CH
SUBJECT: DINNER WITH PRC AMBASSADOR TO BURMA

REF: RANGOON 983 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: AMBASSADOR BEAN, FIRST SECRETARY GEORGE LU AND THEIR WIVES HAD DINNER WITH THE PRC AMBASSADOR, MEMBERS OF HIS STAFF AND THEIR WIVES AT THE PRC RESIDENCE. ALTHOUGH MUCH OF THE DISCUSSION WAS PURELY SOCIAL, SEVERAL SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS DID ARISE. THESE INCLUDED: (A) THE BRZEZINSKI VISIT, (B) THE ROLE OF CHINESE AMERICANS IN OUR SOCIETY, (C) NORMALIZATION OF U.S.-PRC RELATIONS, (D) SOVIET-CUBAN INVOLVEMENT IN AFRICA, (E) ILLICIT NARCOTICS TRAFFIC, AND (F) THE RUMORED PRC SPONSORED ASIAN SOLIDARITY CONFERENCE. THESE ITEMS ARE DISCUSSED IN SOME DETAIL BELOW. THE PARTICIPANTS BELIEVE THAT THE EVENING WAS WELL SPENT AND PROPOSE TO CONTINUE SOCIAL CONTACT WITH THE PRC EMBASSY STAFF AS OPPORTUNITY PERMITS. END SUMMARY.

2. TOGETHER WITH FIRST SECRETARY GEORGE LU AND OUR WIVES, I HAD DINNER AT HIS RESIDENCE WITH THE PRC AMBASSADOR MO YEN-CHUNG, HIS COUNSELLOR, TWO INTERPRETERS AND THEIR WIVES. THE
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INVITATION WAS APPARENTLY A RECIPROCATATION FOR THE LUNCHEON I ARRANGED ON MARCH 19 AT WHICH AMBASSADOR MO MET AMBASSADOR WOODCOCK. IT MAY ALSO HAVE BEEN A RECOGNITION OF THE GROWING SOCIAL CONTACT THAT HAS TAKEN PLACE BETWEEN SELECTED PERSONNEL OF THE PRC AND U.S. MISSIONS SINCE THAT LUNCHEON.

3. MUCH OF THE CONVERSATION WAS ORDINARY SOCIAL CHITCHAT.

HOWEVER, AMBASSADOR MO LED HIS CONVERSATION WITH ME INTO MATTERS OF SUBSTANCE SEVERAL TIMES. HE SEEMED PLEASED WITH AND EAGER TO DISCUSS THE BRZEZINSKI VISIT, PRACTICALLY GLOWING WHEN HE TOLD ME HE HAD HEARD OVER THE RADIO THAT BREZINSKI HAD BEEN RECEIVED BY CHAIRMAN HUA. I TOLD HIM THAT I HAD NO OFFICIAL INFORMATION ON THE VISIT BUT FROM RADIO AND PRESS REPORTS I THOUGHT IT WAS GOING WELL. HE ALSO ENVINCED SOME INTEREST IN THE POSITION OF CHINESE AMERICANS IN U.S. SOCIETY. HE APPEARED SOMEWHAT MISINFORMED, SAYING HE UNDERSTOOD THEY WERE PRIMARILY ENGAGED IN LAUNDRY AND RESTAURANT BUSINESS. WE TRIED TO CORRECT THAT IMPRESSION.

4. AS HE HAD ON MARCH 19, AMBASSADOR MO PRESSED ON THE DESIRABILITY AND NECESSITY FOR NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS BETWEEN THE U.S. AND THE PRC. HE MILDLY QUESTIONED THE U.S. SERIOUSNESS OF PURPOSE IN PURSUING THIS GOAL I ASSURED HIM THAT WE WERE SERIOUS AND, ALTHOUGH WE PROCEEDED FROM A COMMON FOUNDATION AND HAD SIMILAR GOALS, THERE WERE PROBLEMS, ON BOTH SIDES, THAT HAD TO BE RESOLVED IN THE PROCESS OF NORMALIZATION. THEREFORE, PROGRESS WAS LIKELY TO BE SLOW. AMBASSADOR MO THEN SAID THAT EVEN WITHOUT NORMALIZATION THERE WERE INTERNATIONAL MATTERS (WHICH HE DID NOT SPECIFY) IN WHICH THE U.S. AND PRC HAD COMMON CONCERNS AND THAT WE SHOULD CONTINUE TO PURSUE THESE. I AGREED, CITING THE HISTORICAL GOOD RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE CHINESE AND AMERICAN PEOPLES AS BEING A BASIS FOR COOPERATION IN THESE MATTERS.

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5. AS HE WAS ON MARCH 19, AMBASSADOR MO WAS CRITICAL OF SOVIET-CUBAN INVOLVEMENT IN AFRICA, PARTICULARLY IN ETHIOPIA AND ZAIRE. HE WAS MORE CRITICAL OF CUBA THAN THE SOVIET UNION THIS TIME AND ASKED ME WHETHER THE CUBANS WERE FIGHTING IN ZAIRE. I TOLD HIM THAT WE HAD NO CONFIRMED EVIDENCE THAT CUBAN FORCES WERE INVOLVED IN THE CURRENT FIGHTING BUT THAT WE HAD CONFIRMED THAT THE CUBANS HAD PROVIDED TRAINING FOR THE REBEL FORCES. HE INDICATED THAT THIS WAS ONE OF THE INTERNATIONAL PROBLEMS ABOUT WHICH THE U.S. AND PRC SHARED CONCERN. I AGREED.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 RANGOON 1870

6. TOWARD THE END OF THE EVENING, AMBASSADOR MO RAISED THE GOLDEN TRIANGLE ILLICIT NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING WITH ME, IMPLYING THAT HE WAS NOT INFORMED ON THE SUBJECT. (WE KNOW THAT AT LEAST ONE SENIOR MEMBER OF HIS STAFF IS QUITE KNOWLEDGEABLE ON THE SUBJECT.) IN RESPONSE TO HIS QUESTIONS, I DESCRIBED IN GENERAL TERMS THE LOCAL CULTIVATION, REFINEMENT AND EXPORT PATTERS AND THE ROUTES TO EUROPE AND THE U.S., POINTING OUT THAT THE MAJOR TRAFFICKERS ON THE BURMESE SIDE WERE INSURGENT GROUPS WHO FINANCED THEIR ACTIVITIES FROM THE TRAFFICKING PROCEEDS. AMBASSADOR MO SUGGESTED THAT THEIR TRAFFICKING ACTIVITIES WERE IN PURSUIT OF LEGITIMATE POLITICAL GOALS. I RESPONDED BY SAYING THAT INSOFAR AS I KNEW, WHILE PERHAPS ONE OR TWO INSURGENT GROUPS WERE POLITICALLY MOTIVATED, MOST OF THE INSURGENTS WERE ECONOMICALLY MOTIVATED AND WERE NOT ONLY ENGAGED IN NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING BUT IN THE SMUGGLING OF MANY TYPES OF GOODS AND COMMODITIES IN BOTH DIRECTIONS ACROSS THE BORDER. I SUCCESSFULLY RESISTED THE TEMPTATION TO COMMENT ON THE ROLE OF THE PRC-SUPPORTED BURMA COMMUNIST PARTY (BCP) IN ILLICIT NARCOTICS TRAFFIC AND DID NOT MENTION THE U.S. NCAP ACTIVITY IN BURMA.

7. AS WE WERE ABOUT TO LEAVE, AMBASSADOR MO SUGGESTED THAT WE AND OUR STAFFS SHOULD SOCIALIZE ON OTHER OCCASIONS. HE OFFERED CONFIDENTIAL

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ACCESS TO HIS SWIMMING POOL, HIS BADMINTON COURT AND HIS PING-PONG TABLE. ALSO HE SUGGESTED THAT WE ATTEND EACH OTHERS PARTIES. (SEVERAL DAYS EARLIER, HE HAD TOLD GEORGE LU THAT SOCIALIZATION BETWEEN THE TWO EMBASSIES WAS POSSIBLE, SO LONG AS THE OCCASIONS INVOLVED ONLY AMERICANS AND CHINESE. HE SPECIFICALLY RULED OUT ATTENDANCE AT EACH OTHER'S NATIONAL DAY RECEPTIONS.) HE NOTED THAT THIS HAD ALREADY OCCURRED BETWEEN THE PRC AND AUSTRALIAN EMBASSIES. I INDICATED THAT I THOUGHT FURTHER SOCIAL CONTACT WAS DESIRABLE AND USEFUL.

8. IN A SEPARATE CONVERSATION WITH GEORGE LU, PRC COUNSELLOR

CHIN CHANG-JU DENIED THAT THE PRC WISHED TO CONVENE THE OFT-RUMORED ASIAN SOLIDARITY CONFERENCE. HE SAID IT WAS ONLY A RUMOR AND THAT THE PRC DID NOT OPERATE THAT WAY BUT PREFERRED TO DEAL BILATERALLY WITH ITS NEIGHBORS. CHIN TOLD LU THAT THE PRC COULD NOT TOTALLY WITHDRAW ITS SUPPORT FROM THE BCP BECAUSE OF THE FRATERNAL RELATIONSHIP THAT EXISTS BETWEEN THE BCP AND THE CCP. REGARDING TAIWAN, CHIN REITERATED THE PRC'S THREE CONDITIONS FOR NORMALIZATION (ABROGATION OF THE SECURITY TREATY, WITHDRAWAL OF U.S. TROOPS AND DERECOGNITION OF THE ROC). HOWEVER, HE SAID PRC WOULD NOT TAKE TAIWAN BY FORCE AND U.S. TRADE RELATIONS WITH TAIWAN COULD CONTINUE. HE ALSO SAID THAT THE PRC COULD NOT PUBLICLY STATE THE LATTER TWO POINTS.

9. COMMENT: THE EVENING WAS RELAXED AND INFORMAL. THE PRC PERSONNEL APPEARED GENUINELY WARM AND INTERESTED IN HAVING NORMAL DIPLOMATIC AND SOCIAL DISCOURSE WITH THE AMERICANS PRESENT. THEY ALSO SEEMED GENUINELY INTERESTED IN A CONTINUING SOCIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THIS EMBASSY. WE ASSUME THAT AMBASSADOR MO AND HIS STAFF ARE RESPONDING TO INSTRUCTIONS FROM PEKING. UNLESS THE DEPARTMENT OBJECTS, WE WILL CONTINUE TO DEVELOP SOCIAL CONTACTS WITH SELECTED MEMBERS OF THE PRC EMBASSY STAFF AND I WILL EXCHANGE HOSPITALITY WITH AMBASSADOR MO PERIODICALLY AS APPROPRIATE
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OCCASIONS PRESENT THEMSELVES. THERE MAY NOT BE MUCH TO BE GAINED SUBSTANTIVELY AT THE AMBASSADORIAL LEVEL, BUT IT IS PROBABLE THAT THE WORK OF OUR SECONDARY AND TERTIARY LEVEL PERSONNEL WILL BE FACILITATED BY THESE CONTACTS. END COMMENT.
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